Chairman Kathy Yolish called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:03 p.m.

Roll Call:
John Fitzgerald   James Orazietti, Vice Chair
Amanda Kilmartin Carl Rizzo
Kate Kutash Amy Romano, Secretary
Diana Meyer Kathleen Yolish, Chair
Patti Moonan

Full Quorum

Board of Education Administration present: Dr. Christopher Clouet, Superintendent of Schools; Kenneth Saranich, Assistant Superintendent; Carole Pannozzo, Human Resources Director; Rick Belden, Finance Director

(1 tape on file in City/Town Clerk’s office)

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda
Kate Kutash moved to approve the agenda, motion seconded by Amanda Kilmartin and carried with all in favor.

Presentations/Recognitions
Innovative Educator – Superintendent Clouet introduced Kristen Nigretti, SIS Language Arts teacher as this month’s Innovative Educator. Ms. Nigretti gave a presentation of a project she created as part of the LA curriculum. She discussed the process students used to design and create a comfortable student reading space, which included scientific research, mathematic skills, and use of the Design Thinking model and Argument Writing unit. Several students from the winning team were in attendance and were recognized. Ms. Nigretti said Commissioner Cardona was very impressed during his recent visit to the School of Innovation and wrote about it in an article on the State Department of Education website. Principal Dina Marks commented on the project and said Ms. Nigretti made excellent use of innovative teaching skills.

Public Hearing
Mr. and Mrs. Mersiadis, 53 Cloverdale Avenue, parents of a kindergarten student at Mohegan, expressed concerns about a recent presentation on the Holocaust given by a Rabbi, which they felt was inappropriate for the age group of students. Superintendent Clouet said the video will be viewed, he will have a conversation with the presenter to make sure the age group is correct, and he will follow up with the parents.

Walter Dunn, 836 South Main Street, Beacon Falls, parent of SIS student, attended the recent Ad Hoc Intergenerational Diversity Group meeting and made some positive comments and suggestions.
Approval of Minutes
Kate Kutash moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 20, 2019 and Special Meetings of November 25 and December 11, 2019; motion seconded by Patti Moonan. Motion carried with all in favor. Kathy Yolish made two corrections to the November 25 minutes. Kate Kutash moved to approve the minutes of November 25 as amended; motion seconded by James Orazietti and passed with all in favor.

Communications to the Board
Amy Romano provided a handout and said she was asked by an anonymous source to read into the minutes a letter dated May 8, 2019 to the Shelton Police Department from the Ansonia-Milford State’s Attorney concerning a personnel matter that has been resolved. Discussion was held and consensus was to not read the letter and include it as an attachment to the minutes. Mrs. Romano said a holiday greeting was received from Chinni and Meuser.

Superintendent’s Reports & Action Items
Instructional Update – Superintendent Clouet stated Football Coach Jeff Roy announced to his team today that he will be stepping down. He stated Coach Roy runs an excellent football program and will be greatly missed. Consensus was to direct Board Secretary Amy Romano to send a letter of congratulations to Coach Roy, who is the all-time winning SHS Football Coach. Superintendent Clouet discussed the Next Generation Science Standards, and said the test reflects the kind of challenges students will face in their futures. He stated our students are above the state average, and we look forward to making more progress. Dr. Clouet said that the brief Orientation for the Board held prior to this meeting was useful as a reminder for some and new to others. He proposed the idea of having the option of a three-hour delay. He discussed the process in making a decision to cancel school and the vast difference in weather conditions in the district. He said the three-hour option would allow more flexibility.

James Orazietti moved to give the Superintendent the option to add a three-hour delay for inclement weather; motion seconded by Kate Kutash and passed with all in favor.

Proposed 2020-2021 Calendar and Holiday List – Assistant Superintendent Kenneth Saranich reviewed the attachment and discussion ensued. He stated our policy states there is no penalty for absence if a student’s family observes a non-recognized holiday. The issue of scheduling field trips or other events to avoid conflict with religious holidays will be discussed at Policy. Mr. Saranich said he will make sure no back-to-school nights conflict with BOE meetings. Excess snow days and starting after Labor Day versus prior to were also discussed. He requested that suggestions be sent to him directly for referral to Policy Committee, and the final calendar will be presented for a vote at the next regular meeting. Carole Pannozzo stated there are financial implications for employees if another holiday is added.

(Note: Tape 1; Side B at 7:32 PM)

Kate Kutash said since there are so many new members of the board, perhaps a series of presentations could be part of Teaching and Learning. Suggestions should be sent to Amy Romano for discussion with Ken and Vicky.
**Approved Field Trip** – Board members were apprised of an approved field trip for SHS students to go to the Junior Statesman Regional Conference in Washington, DC, February 6-9, 2020. Kathy Yolish questioned the cost. Kenneth Saranich explained there is a new form that does not include cost. It is to get initial approval for the trip.

**Board Action Items**
Kate Kutash moved to approve the request of SHS Wrestling Parent Booster club to conduct fundraising activities during the 2019-2020 season; motion seconded by Amanda Kilmartin and passed with all in favor.

Kate Kutash moved to approve the request of Shelton FLL (First Lego League) to conduct fundraising activities to offset the costs associated with the Predators team’s participation in the World Festival Tournament in Detroit in April 2020; motion seconded by Amanda Kilmartin and passed with all in favor.

**Comments by the Board Chair**
“In reflecting about this journey as the Board chair and working with six new members of the Board, I have realized that we are near the end of the year and we survived. We survived a primary, an election and having to make some difficult but necessary decisions. 
It’s nearly Christmas and I think we have a lot to be grateful for. We have been supported by our families, and we have proven to be strong in our beliefs and are prepared to do the job we were elected to do. I feel confident that we will survive as a working team and do what is best for our children, their parents, our taxpayers and our employees of the Shelton Board of Education.
I am also hopeful about looking ahead- to new beginnings, planning the future of educational pathways, resolutions to make Shelton schools stronger, and nurturing creativity and resourceful ideas from those who work with our students each day.
We need to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative (as the song goes). There are many positives to be found in our schools- certainly far more than the negatives that seem to cloud them.
Our four schools of distinction and two that were a point or two away from the recognition, the Robotics and Legos teams and the successes they can certainly boast about, our athletic teams that consistently perform well and the students who academically achieve--earning many accolades in their studies- just to name a few.
And finally, I am wishful. I am wishful for everyone to have a safe, healthy and peaceful holiday— in whatever way you celebrate and a New Year that will bring many blessings to you and your families.”

**Reports of Standing Committees**
**Teaching & Learning** – Amy Romano said the committee did not meet and will hold its first meeting on January 14 at 4:30 p.m.

**Finance** – John Fitzgerald reviewed the topics of the meeting of December 11 including reports from Rick Belden and extensive question and answer period. John Calhoun gave a Facilities Report. Minutes are online for review. The next meeting is January 15. The budget process is ongoing for the next couple weeks. Mr. Belden will work with Dr. Clouet to establish budget workshops in January. The budget approved by the BOE is due to the City Finance Department on February 14.
Policy – James Orazietti stated there was no meeting held. The next meeting will be announced.

Reports of Special Committees
CES – Kate Kutash said the meetings are the first Thursday of each month from 3-5 p.m. Kathy Yolish will try to cover meetings if Kate Kutash is unavailable, due to the time of day. Minutes will be sent to Kate Kutash so she can give a report to the Board. Kathy Yolish said she attended the Legislative Breakfast with Dr. Clouet on December 6 and reviewed the topics discussed including Excess Cost to supplement Special Education; Social/Emotional Learning; regional alternative education program; Classroom Safety Bill; FOI requests.

CABE — Diana Meyer said Patti Moonan and she attended the New Board Member Leadership Training and reviewed the various presentations. Diana will keep members apprised of upcoming training. She said we are the one of the only districts to use paper packets, and we do not have a student representative.

Unfinished Business
There was nothing discussed.

New Business
There was nothing discussed.

For Your Information
Mrs. Yolish noted the attached reports on Vacancy, Staff and Stipend Actions and Enrollment.

Celebrations
Kathy Yolish discussed the Mohegan winter concert, which was very impressive and attended by many parentns. She commended Lorene Avery, Maria Zampano and Vicky White for their article on Project ExcEL in SheltonLife. She, along with Diana Meyer, Kate Kutash and Patti Moonan, attended the CAPSS Superintendent Student Recognition Awards Dinner and said Shelton was the only district with board members in attendance in support of its superintendent. Shelton’s Jazz Quartet gave a wonderful performance. Students Ananya Yadav, Christopher Belden, Robin Uhrynowski and Marissa Manzo were honored.

Diana Meyer discussed the First Lego League competition and the two teams place first and second that will go on to the State Competition.

Kate Kutash talked about the Adaptations performances.

Amanda Kilmartin welcomed the new members and said she appreciates the different perspectives everyone brings to the table.

Adjournment
Mrs. Yolish adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Diane Luther
Secretary to Board of Education
December 23, 2019